EPIC COMICS
THE SISTERHOOD of STEEL™
SISTERHOOD OF STEEL 8
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MARVEL®

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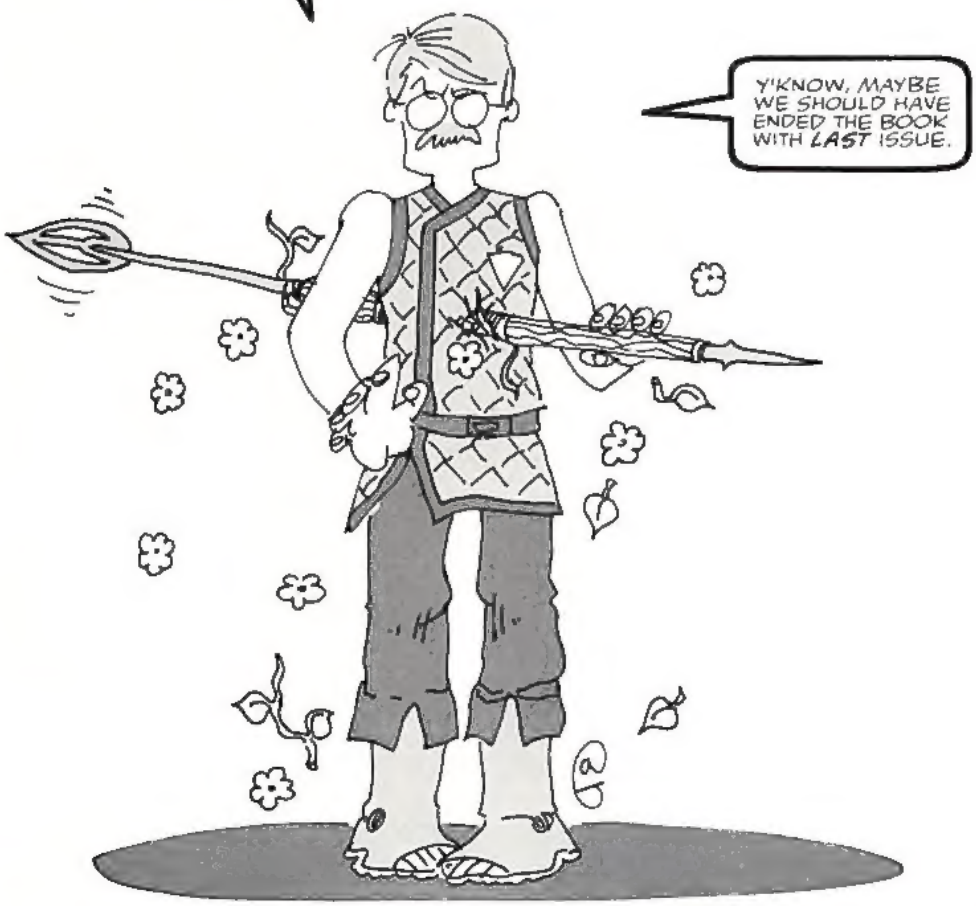
HELLO. I'M ***ARCHIE GOODWIN***, EDITOR OF MARVEL'S ***EPIC COMICS*** LINE, HERE TO WELCOME YOU TO WHAT WILL BE THE FINAL ISSUE OF ***SISTERHOOD OF STEEL***. AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE ADVENTURES OF BORONWÉ, HER FRIENDS AND HER ENEMIES, WILL CONTINUE SOMEDAY, PERHAPS WITH A DIFFERENT PUBLISHER. FOR THE MOMENT THOUGH, SINCE THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE, I THOUGHT I'D DISPENSE WITH MY USUAL RELENTLESS PLUGGING OF OTHER ***EPIC*** TITLES -- SUCH AS OUR NEW LIMITED SERIES, ***SIX FROM SIRIUS II***, AND OUR LATEST REGULAR COMIC, ***THE BOZZ CHRONICLES*** -- AND JUST ENJOY MYSELF A LITTLE. EVER SINCE WE BEGAN ***SISTERHOOD***, I'VE BEEN INTRIGUED BY THE SPEAR-LIKE WEAPON THAT HAS DECORATED THE BOOK'S LOGO. I FIGURED IT MIGHT BE FUN TO PULL IT OFF THERE AND TRY MY HAND AT THROWING IT AROUND A BIT AS LONG AS NO ONE WAS LOOKING. I MEAN, LET'S FACE IT. SURE, THE MEMBERS OF THE SISTERHOOD WHO USE THESE THINGS IN BATTLE ARE TRAINED PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE WORKED AT DEVELOPING MASTERY SINCE CHILDHOOD. BUT I'M A FORMER WAR COMICS EDITOR AND VETERAN OF THE U.S. ARMY. HOW MUCH TROUBLE COULD IT ***BE***, RIGHT?

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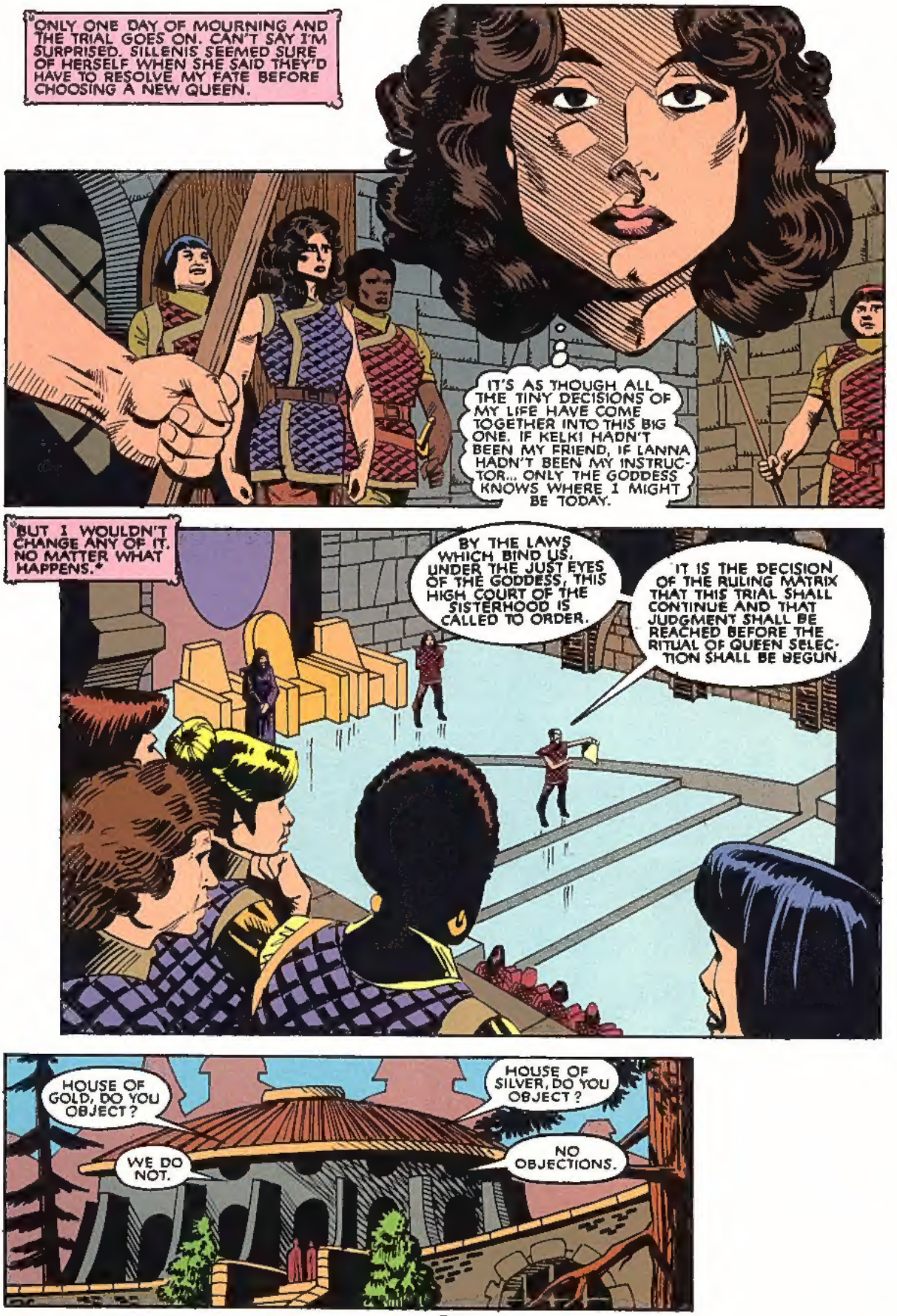
"THEY'VE LET ME OUT OF PRISON LONG ENOUGH TO ATTEND THE QUEEN'S FUNERAL.
"FOR ALL MY YEARS IN THE SISTERHOOD, SHE WAS MY QUEEN.
"BUT NOW, HER DEATH CONCERNS ME LESS THAN HER EMPTY THRONE, AND THE FACT THAT SHE DIED NAMING NO SUCCESSOR.
"FOR IF VANDALIS BECOMES QUEEN...WHAT HOPE CAN I POSSIBLY HAVE?
"WHAT HOPE DO I HAVE AS IT IS?"

# JUDGEMENT AND JUSTICE

SO CLOSE! SO CLOSE! BUT I MUSTN'T BE LIKE THE ANXIOUS RUNNER WHO STUMBLES AT THE END OF THE RACE. NOW, MORE THAN EVER, I MUST BE CAUTIOUS, YET BOLD.
POOR BO. I WONDER WHAT SHE'S THINKING ABOUT? I WISH I KNEW THE RIGHT THING TO SAY.
POOR DINDRA. I'LL BET SHE WISHES SHE'D NEVER MET ME.
THIS COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED AT A WORSE TIME. THIS TRIAL IS ALREADY TEARING THE SISTERHOOD IN TWO. BUT TO ENGAGE IN A BITTER STRUGGLE FOR THE THRONE NOW...
I'VE BEEN TALKING TO A LOT OF THE SISTERS. MOST OF 'EM KNOW VAN'S USING IT AS A FORUM FOR HER BRAND OF POLITICS. TROUBLE IS, A LOT OF THEM AGREE WITH HER.
DAMN! SILLENIS ASKS THAT THE TRIAL CONTINUE. SHE'S SHOWN ME PROOF THAT MY REPRESENTATION OF THE QUEEN DOESN'T END WITH HER DEATH, IN THIS CASE. I THINK SHE'S RIGHT. WE MUST FORCE THIS ISSUE AND HOPE VANDALIS MAKES A MISTAKE.


ONLY ONE DAY OF MOURNING AND THE TRIAL GOES ON. CAN'T SAY I'M SURPRISED. SILLENIS SEEMED SURE OF HERSELF WHEN SHE SAID THEY'D HAVE TO RESOLVE MY FATE BEFORE CHOOSING A NEW QUEEN.
IT'S AS THOUGH ALL THE TINY DECISIONS OF MY LIFE HAVE COME TOGETHER INTO THIS BIG ONE. IF KELKI HADN'T BEEN MY FRIEND, IF LANNA HADN'T BEEN MY INSTRUCTOR... ONLY THE GODDESS KNOWS WHERE I MIGHT BE TODAY.
BUT I WOULDN'T CHANGE ANY OF IT. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.
BY THE LAWS WHICH BIND US, UNDER THE JUST EYES OF THE GODDESS, THIS HIGH COURT OF THE SISTERHOOD IS CALLED TO ORDER.
IT IS THE DECISION OF THE RULING MATRIX THAT THIS TRIAL SHALL CONTINUE AND THAT JUDGMENT SHALL BE REACHED BEFORE THE RITUAL OF QUEEN SELECTION SHALL BE BEGUN.
HOUSE OF GOLD, DO YOU OBJECT?
WE DO NOT.
HOUSE OF SILVER, DO YOU OBJECT?
NO OBJECTIONS.

"I KNOW SILLENIS IS FURIOUS WITH ME. PERHAPS SHE'S GIVEN UP AND JUST WANTS TO GET THIS OVER WITH AS SOON AS SHE CAN.
"BUT WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?! DINDRA AND LANNA TESTIFIED ON MY BEHALF AND STILL VANDALIS TURNS THEIR WORDS AGAINST THEM!
"THE PRIESTESS REFUSES TO RELEASE ME FROM MY VOW OF SECRECY SO I CANNOT DEFEND MYSELF AGAINST VANDALIS' LIES.
"EVEN MY OWN WORDS SOUND GUILTY. I HAD TO ADMIT TO LETTING KELKI ESCAPE! HOW COULD I DENY IT?
"ODD THING IS, SILLENIS MENTIONED SOMEONE VISITING HER IN SECRET. BUT SHE WOULDN'T TELL ME WHO IT WAS. I'M SO LOST AND CONFUSED. IF I ONLY KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON..."

SISTER BORONWË, THE MATRIX AND THE HOUSES ARE WILLING TO CONTINUE THE TRIAL WITHOUT A QUEEN.
YOUR WOMAN-OF-LAW ASKS TO CONTINUE. YET I WILL END THESE PROCEEDINGS HERE AND NOW IF YOU SO REQUEST.
"STOP IT NOW? PUT MYSELF AT THE MERCY OF THE NEW MATRIX? Oh, GODDESS, I'M SO *SCARED*. HELP ME!
THANK YOU, MY LADY, BUT I WISH THE TRIAL TO CONTINUE.
PRINCESS, YOU MAY BRING FORTH YOUR WITNESS.

I HAVE BUT ONE, COMMANDER GLESPA, WILL YOU COME UP, PLEASE?

COMMANDER, THIS GIRL HAS BEEN UNDER YOUR COMMAND, HAS SHE NOT?
YES.

YOU WITNESSED KELKI'S ESCAPE AND BORONWË'S PART IN IT?
I DID.

IS IT YOUR OPINION THAT SISTER BORONWË ALLOWED THE GIRL AND HER MAN TO ESCAPE?
YES.

IS IT YOUR OPINION THAT SISTER BORONWË DELIBERATELY DELAYED IN OBEYING YOUR COMMAND?
YES. SHE HESITATED.
WOULD YOU THEN CONCLUDE THAT SISTER BORONWË IS GUILTY OF TREASON?

THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF GUILT INVOLVED HERE.
THANK YOU, COMMANDER.

BORONWË APPEARS TO BE BEYOND HELP, YET SHE KEEPS HER VOW OF SILENCE TO ME.
WHAT A CRIME TO WASTE A GIRL OF SUCH INTEGRITY!
WITH THE PRINCESS' PERMISSION, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK COMMANDER GLESPA TO EXPOUND UPON HER FINAL STATEMENT.
DO YOU, COMMANDER GLESPA, BELIEVE SISTER BORONWË TO BE GUILTY OF TREASON?
I DO NOT!
BY THE GODDESS··!
I WAS ORDERED TO WATCH THE GIRL AND I DID.
WHO ORDERED THIS ?
THE PRINCESS OF SWORDS!
I HAVE HERE AN ENCODED MESSAGE SENT TO ME BY THE PRINCESS.
I WILL READ THE PASSAGE AT THE BOTTOM.

"AMONG THE CADETS IN YOUR DETAIL WILL BE BORONWÉ, CADET FIRST CLASS. WATCH HER CAREFULLY FOR SIGNS OF TREASON AND WHEN YOU SEE THEM, ARREST HER!" IT'S SIGNED BY VANDALIS.

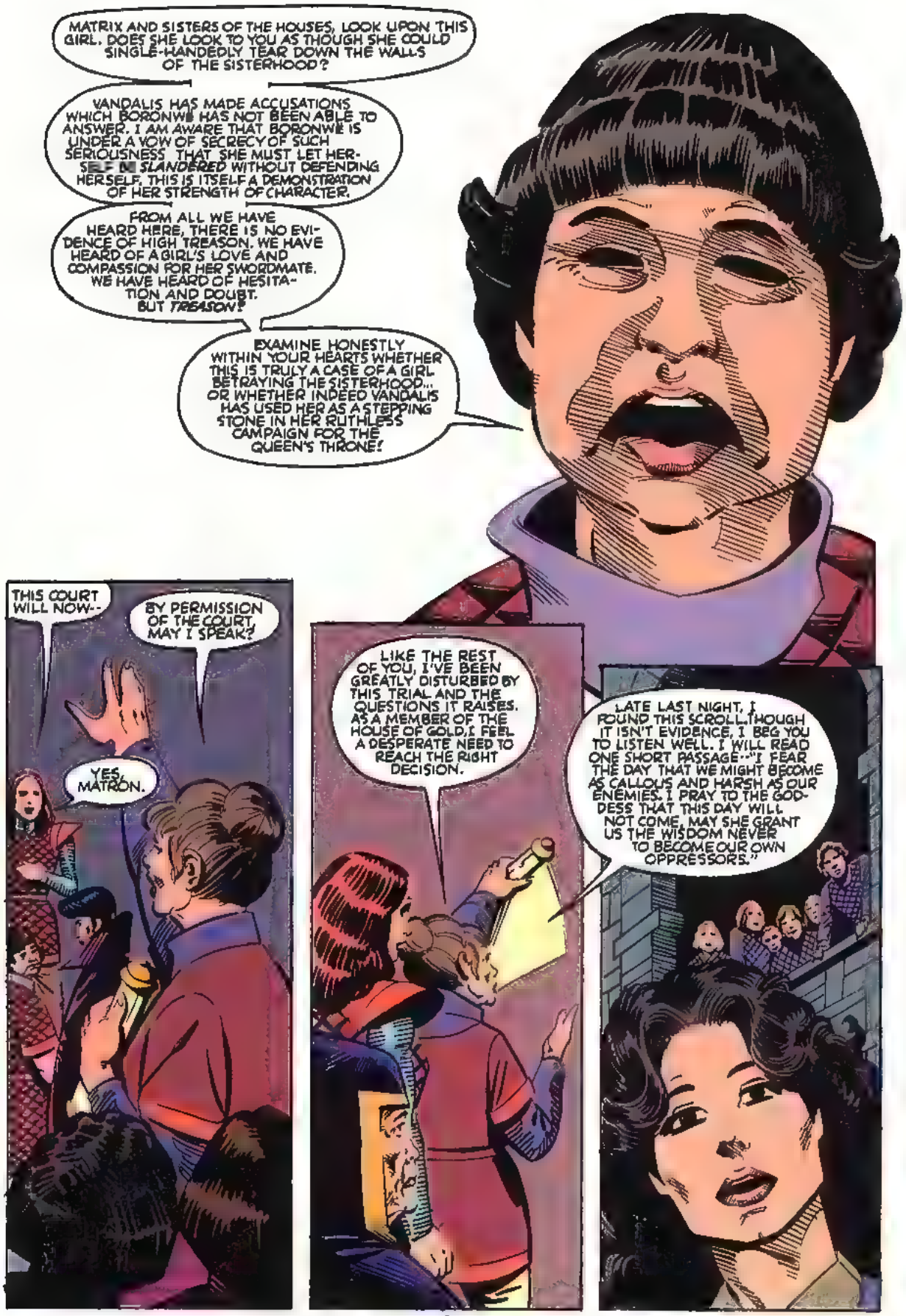
VANDALIS CAME TO ME IN ORANGE AND MADE IT CLEAR THAT SHE DESIRED TO HAVE BORONWÉ ARRESTED FOR TREASON...EVEN IF I MUST *HELP* THIS TO OCCUR!

YOU MISINTERPRETED MY CONCERN, COMMANDER. AS FOR THE ENCODED MESSAGE...

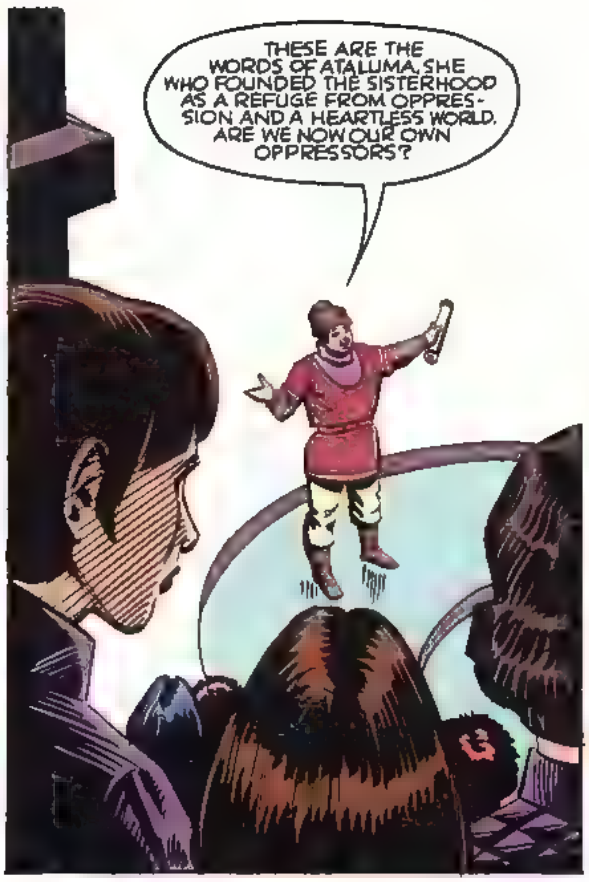
...OF COURSE I ASKED YOU TO WATCH FOR SIGNS OF TREASON! I WAS PERSONALLY CONVINCED OF THE GIRL'S TREASONOUS NATURE. HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HER ATTACK ON ME DURING THE RITUAL?

I ASKED ONLY FOR THE PROOF THAT I KNEW MUST EVENTUALLY COME!
MY LADIES AND SISTERS, I SPOKE OF GUILT BUT THE GUILT BELONGS TO VANDALIS! SHE HAS DELIBERATELY *PERSECUTED* SISTER BORONWÉ AND SET ABOUT TO BRING HER TO TRIAL FOR HER OWN PURPOSES!
I HAVE SEEN NOTHING BUT LOYALTY, HONESTY AND FAITHFULNESS FROM BORONWÉ! WE CANNOT CONDEMN HER FOR APPLYING SUCH FEELINGS TO A SWORDMATE WHO HAD NO PLACE WITHIN THE SISTERHOOD.
IF MY WORD HAS ANY WEIGHT, YOU WILL NOT LET THIS PROMISING YOUNG GIRL BECOME A POLITICAL PAWN! IN MY MIND, SHE IS *INNOCENT!*
SHATH! LEAVE IT TO GLESPA TO TURN THE WORLD UP-SIDE DOWN!
BUT.. WHO DO WE BELIEVE?
I'VE NEVER KNOWN GLESPA TO LIE! NEVER!
DAMN YOU! WHY DID YOU TURN AGAINST ME?!
I DON'T LIKE BEING USED, VANDALIS.
NOT BY ANYONE!

I MUST HAVE ORDER IN THIS COURT! SILENCE!
WE WILL ALL HAVE TIME TO DEBATE THE EVIDENCE IN PRIVATE, SISTERS. PLEASE GIVE THE SPEAKERS YOUR FULL ATTENTION.
PRINCESS AND SISTER SILLENIS, YOU WILL MAKE YOUR FINAL ARGUMENTS NOW. I BEG YOU TO KEEP THEM BRIEF AND TO THE POINT.
MATRIX AND SISTERS OF THE HOUSES, WE ARE IN DANGER. WE ARE OPPOSED ON ALL SIDES, AND THE SLAVERS OPENLY WORK AGAINST US. OUR EXISTENCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN PRECARIOUS, FROM THE FIRST DAY THAT QUEEN ATALUMA OVERTHREW HER ENSLAVERS AND ESTABLISHED OUR ORDER.
QUEEN ATALUMA KNEW THAT OUR ONLY PATH FOR SURVIVAL WAS THE PATH OF STRENGTH AND UNITY. HARSH THOUGH IT MAY SEEM, WE CANNOT AFFORD TO TURN A BLIND EYE TO WHAT MAY APPEAR ON THE SURFACE TO BE, AS SILLENIS SO COYLY PUTS IT, "AN ERROR IN JUDGMENT."
WHAT CHANCE DO WE HAVE ON THE BATTLEFIELD WHEN WE MAKE "AN ERROR IN JUDGMENT"? NONE! BORONWE'S TREASON THREATENS US ALL! FREE HER, AND YOU SET A PRECEDENT THAT OTHERS WILL FOLLOW!
FIND HER GUILTY, SISTERS! SHOW OUR ENEMIES THAT WE ARE STRONG AND UNYIELDING, EVEN WITH OUR OWN! SHOW THEM THE STEEL OF THE SISTERHOOD!


MATRIX AND SISTERS OF THE HOUSES, LOOK UPON THIS GIRL. DOES SHE LOOK TO YOU AS THOUGH SHE COULD SINGLE-HANDEDLY TEAR DOWN THE WALLS OF THE SISTERHOOD?
VANDALIS HAS MADE ACCUSATIONS WHICH BORONWE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO ANSWER. I AM AWARE THAT BORONWE IS UNDER A VOW OF SECRECY OF SUCH SERIOUSNESS THAT SHE MUST LET HERSELF BE *SLANDERED* WITHOUT DEFENDING HERSELF. THIS IS ITSELF A DEMONSTRATION OF HER STRENGTH OF CHARACTER.
FROM ALL WE HAVE HEARD HERE, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF HIGH TREASON. WE HAVE HEARD OF A GIRL'S LOVE AND COMPASSION FOR HER SWORDMATE. WE HAVE HEARD OF HESITATION AND DOUBT. BUT *TREASON!*
EXAMINE HONESTLY WITHIN YOUR HEARTS WHETHER THIS IS TRULY A CASE OF A GIRL BETRAYING THE SISTERHOOD... OR WHETHER INDEED VANDALIS HAS USED HER AS A STEPPING STONE IN HER RUTHLESS CAMPAIGN FOR THE QUEEN'S THRONE!
THIS COURT WILL NOW--
BY PERMISSION OF THE COURT, MAY I SPEAK?
YES, MATRON.
LIKE THE REST OF YOU, I'VE BEEN GREATLY DISTURBED BY THIS TRIAL AND THE QUESTIONS IT RAISES. AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF GOLD, I FEEL A DESPERATE NEED TO REACH THE RIGHT DECISION.
LATE LAST NIGHT, I FOUND THIS SCROLL. THOUGH IT ISN'T EVIDENCE, I BEG YOU TO LISTEN WELL. I WILL READ ONE SHORT PASSAGE--"I FEAR THE DAY THAT WE MIGHT BECOME AS CALLOUS AND HARSH AS OUR ENEMIES. I PRAY TO THE GODDESS THAT THIS DAY WILL NOT COME. MAY SHE GRANT US THE WISDOM NEVER TO BECOME OUR OWN OPPRESSORS."

THIS SCROLL WAS MADE BY OUR FIRST QUEEN.


THESE ARE THE WORDS OF ATALUMA, SHE WHO FOUNDED THE SISTERHOOD AS A REFUGE FROM OPPRESSION AND A HEARTLESS WORLD. ARE WE NOW OUR OWN OPPRESSORS?

HOUSES, RETIRE TO YOUR CHAMBERS AND CONSIDER THE EVIDENCE WE HAVE SEEN AND THE TESTIMONY WE HAVE HEARD. PLEASE TAKE YOUR VOTES AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE

IT'S BEEN TWO HOURS, SILLENIS. IS THAT GOOD OR BAD?
THERE'S NO WAY TO KNOW, GIRL. WE MUST BE PATIENT. IF THERE'S NO DECISION SOON, THEY'LL DISMISS US.

"ANOTHER SET OF BELLS HAS SOUNDER THEY'RE RETURNING.

"THEIR FACES TELL ME NOTHING. I CAN'T STAND THIS ANY LONGER! I JUST WANT TO GET IT OVER WITH!"

SISTERS, WE HAVE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED YOUR VOTES. THE MATRIX HAS ADDED ITS VOTES. I WILL READ THE VERDICT.

IT IS THE JUDGMENT OF THE MATRIX, THE HOUSE OF GOLD AND THE HOUSE OF SILVER...

...REPRESENTING THE FAIR AND JUST BODY OF THE SISTERHOOD OF STEEL, THAT SISTER BORONWÈ, WARRIOR FOURTH CLASS...

...IS FOUND *INNOCENT* OF THE CHARGE OF TREASON AGAINST THE SISTERHOOD. SHE IS *FREE* TO RETURN TO DUTY WITHOUT DISHONOR.

INNOCENT?

WA-HOO!!!

GODDESS BE PRAISED!

SISTERS!!!

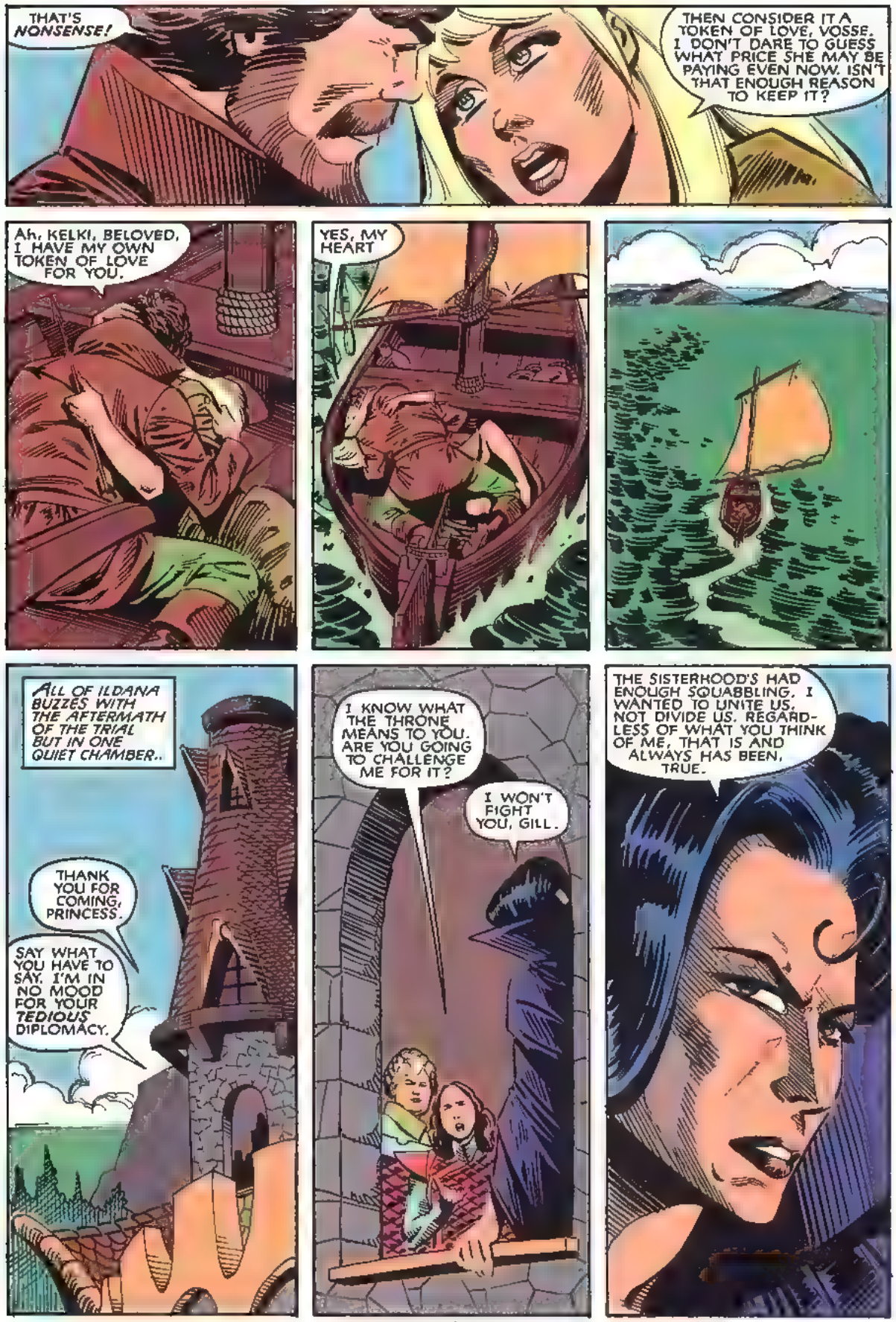
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

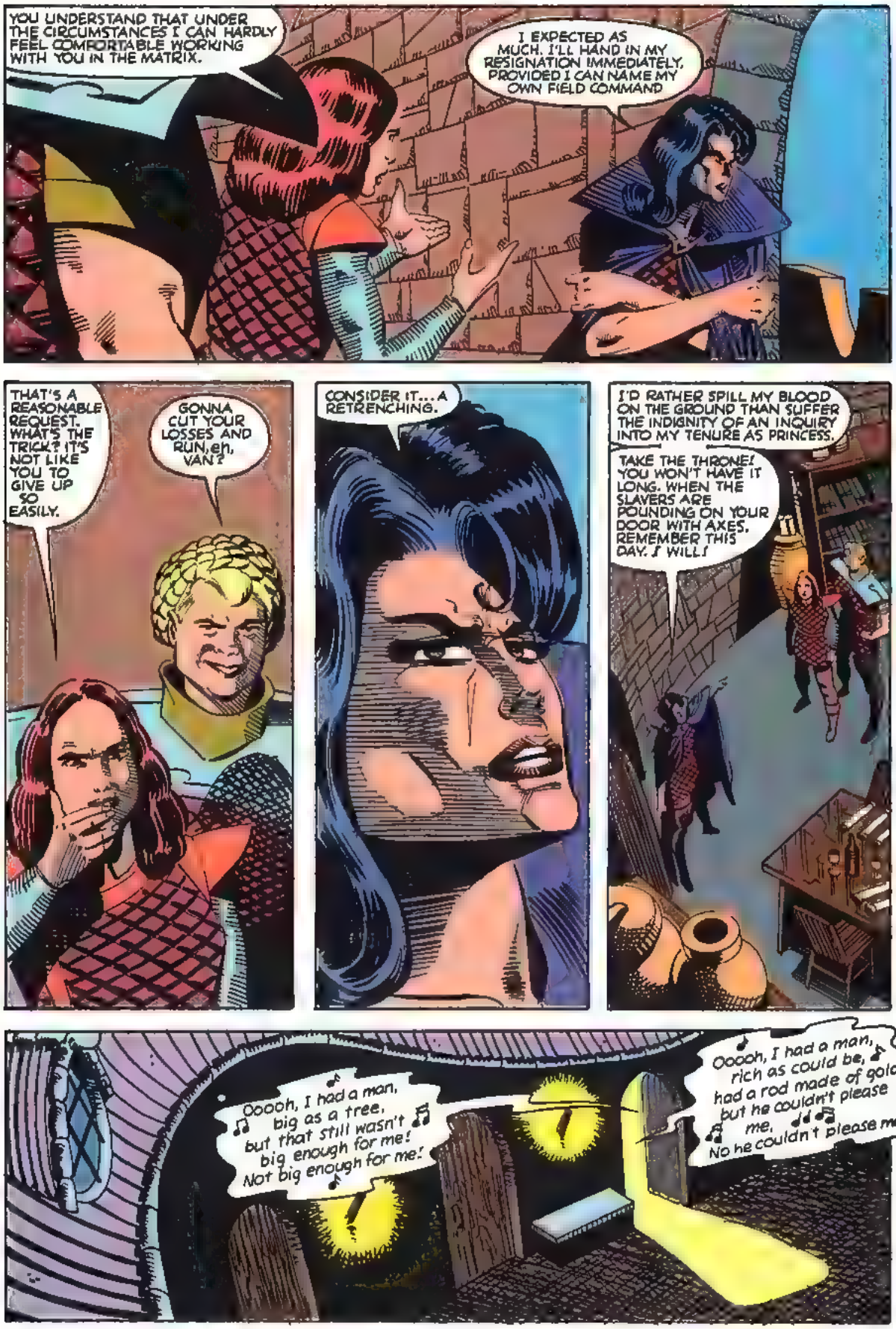
IT WAS EITHER THUNDER... OR AMBYRE.

I'M AMAZED THE WALLS STILL STAND!

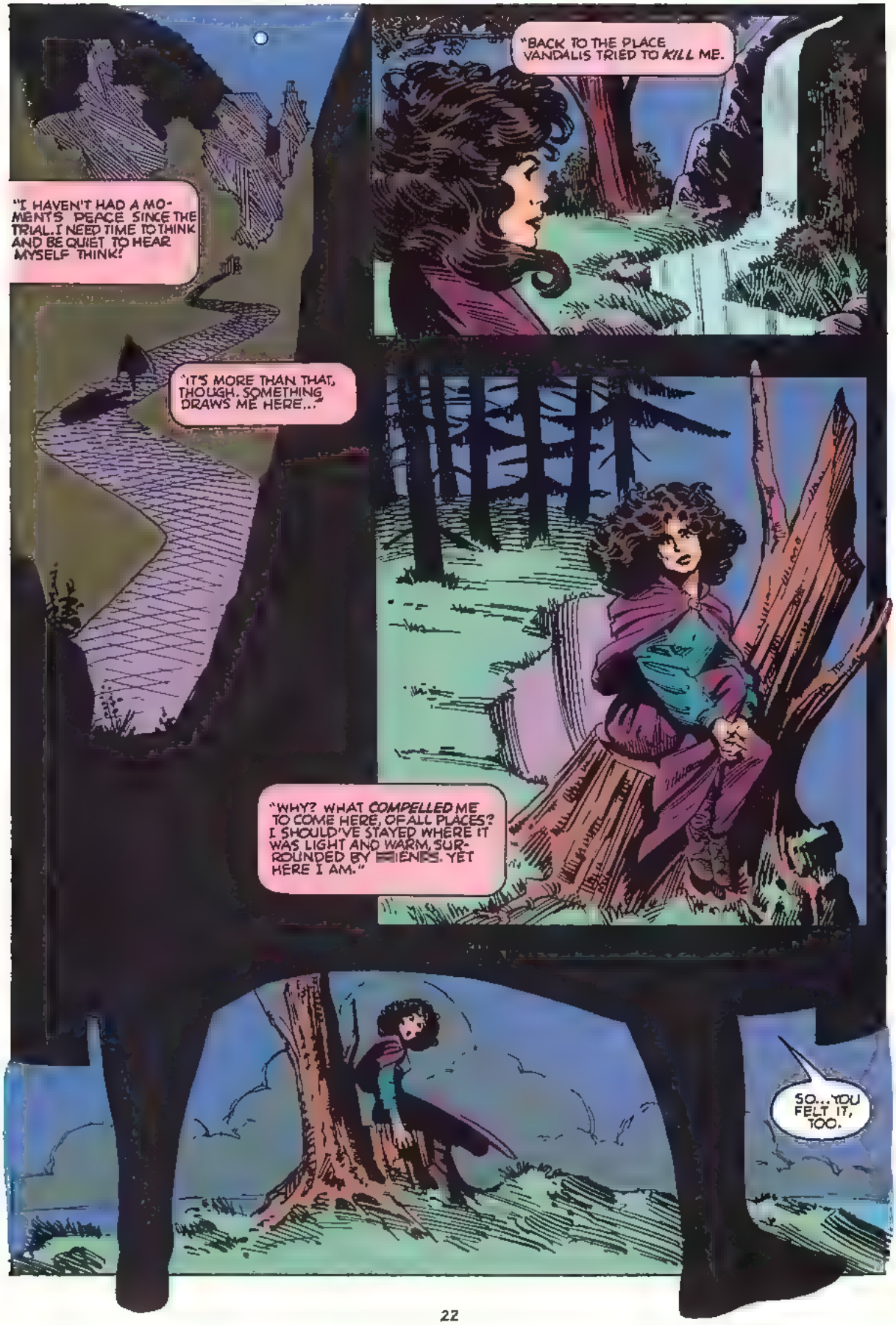
SISTERS! YOUR ATTENTION!
VANDALIS IS RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING! WE NEED STRONG LEADERSHIP AND WE NEED IT NOW!
WE'VE PUT OFF THE SELECTION OF A NEW QUEEN, BUT LET'S NOT WAIT ANOTHER MINUTE! WE ALL KNOW WHO SHOULD LEAD US, AS CAPABLY AS SHE'S LED THIS TRIAL!
HAIL THE QUEEN OF SWORDS!
AYE, GILL!
LET IT BE GILL!
AMBYRE! THIS IS HIGHLY IRREGULAR!
SHUT UP AND TAKE CHARGE, SWORD-MATE!
THEY CAN'T DO THIS! THERE HAS TO BE A PROPER ELECTION! YOU CAN EASILY FIGHT IT, VAN--
THEY'VE MADE THEIR CHOICE!
QUEEN GILL! QUEEN GILL!

FAR FROM THE RAGING TEMPERS AND WILD EMOTIONS OF THE SISTERHOOD, A SMALL CRAFT CARRIES ITS WEARY PASSENGERS TOWARD...
HALF MOON BAY!
WAKE UP, KELKI! WE'VE MADE IT!
YOU-- YOU THINK WE'LL BE SAFE HERE?
I'D HOPED TO COME HERE DIRECTLY. I HAVE COUSINS WHO WILL HIDE US AND HELP US ON OUR WAY. SEE THAT POINT TO THE SOUTH?
IT LOOKS BEAUTIFUL.
THEY HAVE A VILLA THERE AND--DAMN THIS THING! IT'LL BE A PLEASURE TO THROW IT OVERBOARD!
NO!
I HUMORED YOUR DESIRE TO LEAVE IT THERE, BUT I'VE HAD ENOUGH! IT'S ONE MORE PIECE OF YOUR PAST YOU MUST CAST ASIDE!
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. BORONWE BOUGHT OUR FREEDOM WITH IT. HER SPIRIT IS IN IT AND *PROTECTS* US.

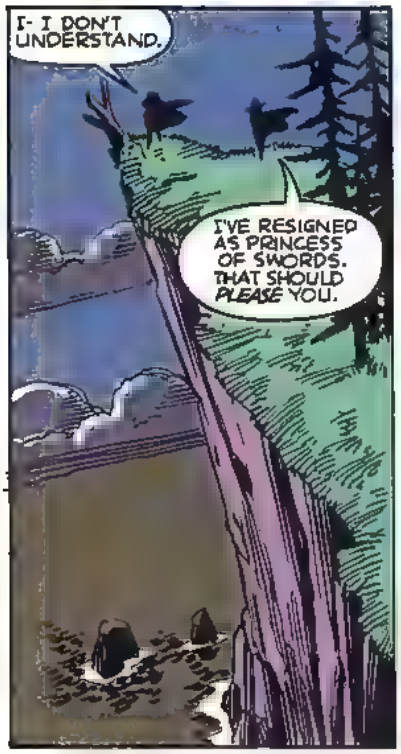

THAT'S NONSENSE!
THEN CONSIDER IT A TOKEN OF LOVE, VOSSE. I DON'T DARE TO GUESS WHAT PRICE SHE MAY BE PAYING EVEN NOW. ISN'T THAT ENOUGH REASON TO KEEP IT?
Ah, KELKI, BELOVED, I HAVE MY OWN TOKEN OF LOVE FOR YOU.
YES, MY HEART
ALL OF ILDANA BUZZES WITH THE AFTERMATH OF THE TRIAL BUT IN ONE QUIET CHAMBER..
THANK YOU FOR COMING, PRINCESS.
SAY WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY. I'M IN NO MOOD FOR YOUR TEDIOUS DIPLOMACY.
I KNOW WHAT THE THRONE MEANS TO YOU. ARE YOU GOING TO CHALLENGE ME FOR IT?
I WON'T FIGHT YOU, GILL.
THE SISTERHOOD'S HAD ENOUGH SQUABBLING. I WANTED TO UNITE US, NOT DIVIDE US. REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU THINK OF ME, THAT IS AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN, TRUE.

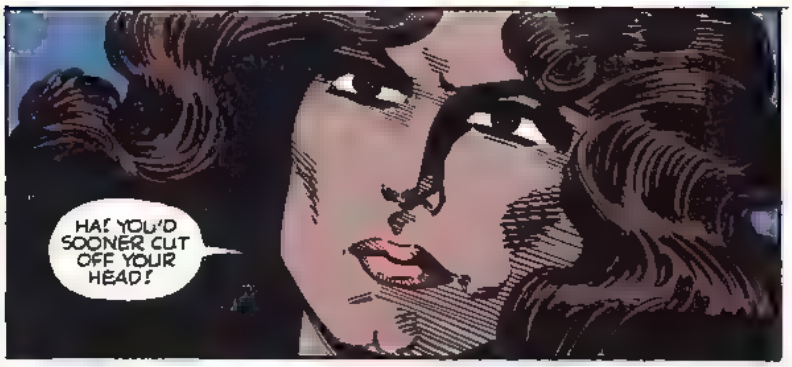

YOU UNDERSTAND THAT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I CAN HARDLY FEEL COMFORTABLE WORKING WITH YOU IN THE MATRIX.
I EXPECTED AS MUCH. I'LL HAND IN MY RESIGNATION IMMEDIATELY, PROVIDED I CAN NAME MY OWN FIELD COMMAND
THAT'S A REASONABLE REQUEST. WHAT'S THE TRICK? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO GIVE UP SO EASILY.
GONNA CUT YOUR LOSSES AND RUN, eh, VAN?
CONSIDER IT... A RETRENCHING.
I'D RATHER SPILL MY BLOOD ON THE GROUND THAN SUFFER THE INDIGNITY OF AN INQUIRY INTO MY TENURE AS PRINCESS.
TAKE THE THRONE! YOU WON'T HAVE IT LONG. WHEN THE SLAVERS ARE POUNDING ON YOUR DOOR WITH AXES, REMEMBER THIS DAY. I WILL!
Ooooh, I had a man, big as a tree, but that still wasn't big enough for me! Not big enough for me!
Ooooh, I had a man, rich as could be, had a rod made of gold but he couldn't please me. No he couldn't please me!

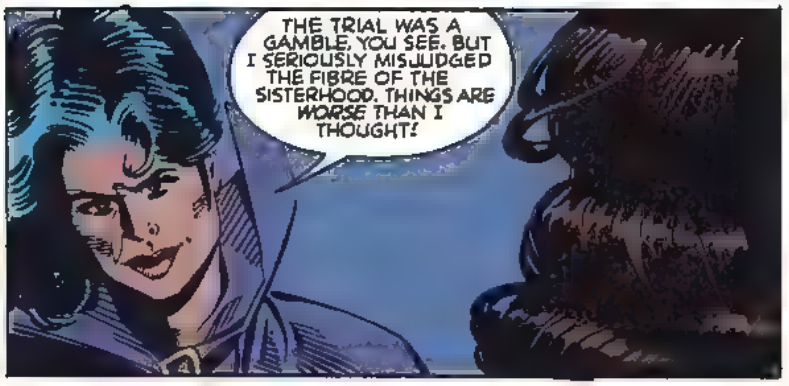
♪ Ooooh, I had a man, ♪
♪ drank hogswill and tea... ♪
GO, DINDRA!
♪ ...wasned himself away ♪
when he went to take a...
♪ AIEEE! ♪
OOUFF!
I HOPE LANNA DOESN'T NOTICE I'VE LEFT HER VICTORY PARTY. SHE'D PROBABLY BE HURT. BUT I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY.
OF COURSE, THE WAY THE GROG IS FLOWING, I DON'T THINK LANNA KNOWS WHERE SHE IS, LET ALONE WHERE I AM.
AND DINDRA! SHATH, THAT GIRL IS CRAZY! SHE MUST NOT HAVE A CALM BONE IN HER ENTIRE BODY!


"I HAVEN'T HAD A MOMENT'S PEACE SINCE THE TRIAL. I NEED TIME TO THINK AND BE QUIET TO HEAR MYSELF THINK!"
"BACK TO THE PLACE VANDALIS TRIED TO KILL ME.
"IT'S MORE THAN THAT, THOUGH. SOMETHING DRAWS ME HERE..."
"WHY? WHAT COMPELLED ME TO COME HERE, OF ALL PLACES? I SHOULD'VE STAYED WHERE IT WAS LIGHT AND WARM, SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS. YET HERE I AM."
SO...YOU FELT IT, TOO.

OH, PUT UP YOUR BLADE! I'M NOT HERE TO FIGHT. NOT *TONIGHT*. IT WAS THE JUICE OF THE BRAMBLE-FLOWER THAT MADE ME SO CARELESSLY VIOLENT BEFORE.
YOU'LL FORGIVE ME IF I HAVE *DOUBTS*, PRINCESS.
FURTHERMORE, YOU WILL NOW ADDRESS ME AS *FIRST COMMANDER* VANDALIS.


I- I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I'VE RESIGNED AS PRINCESS OF SWORDS. THAT SHOULD *PLEASE* YOU.


HA! YOU'D SOONER CUT OFF YOUR HEAD!


THE TRIAL WAS A GAMBLE, YOU SEE. BUT I SERIOUSLY MISJUDGED THE FIBRE OF THE SISTERHOOD. THINGS ARE *WORSE* THAN I THOUGHT!

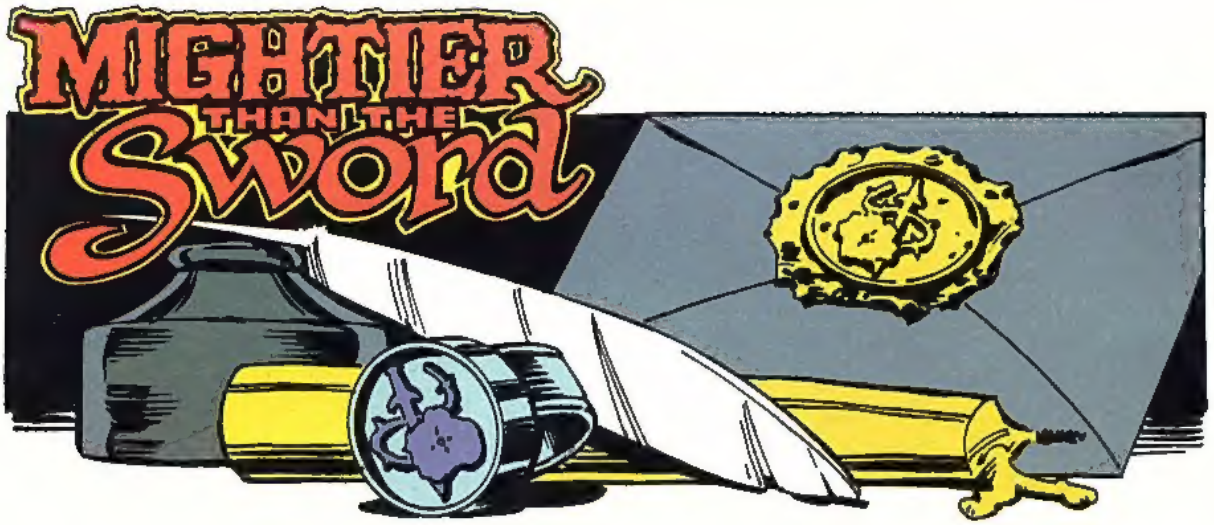
I'LL GO WHERE I'M NEEDED--BACK INTO THE FIELD. I'LL PROVE MYSELF AGAIN. AND WHEN GILL BRINGS *DISASTER* WITH HER WEAK POLICIES, I'LL BE THERE TO *SAVE* US... IF I CAN.
IT REALLY HAD LITTLE TO DO WITH YOU PERSONALLY IN THE BEGINNING. YOU WERE CONVENIENT.. THE PERFECT SET-UP AT THE RIGHT TIME.
YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE YOU DON'T HATE ME? THAT YOU DIDN'T WANT TO DESTROY ME?

Oh, I HATE YOU. EVEN WITHOUT THE DRUG, AND MORE SO NOW THAN EVEN THEN. YOU'VE COST ME A GREAT DEAL.
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE... DON'T YOU FEEL IT? WHEN WE DRANK TOGETHER OF THE FLOWER, IT *BONDED* US!
I DON'T LIKE IT ANYMORE THAN YOU DO! ALL THE SAME, I KNEW YOU'D COME, PULLED HERE BY THE SAME FORCE THAT PULLED ME.
FATE, DESTINY, WHATEVER NAME YOU WANT TO GIVE IT. AND SOMEDAY, WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, I WILL SEE YOU DIE!
MAYBE IT'LL BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND, VANDALIS! HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF THAT?

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH
WE'LL SEE WHO LAUGHS LAST, BITCH.

"NEVER AGAIN AM I GOING TO WALK IN INNOCENCE AND IGNORANCE! HEAR ME, GODDESS! I SWEAR I WILL NOT BE A PAWN! I WILL NOT LET MYSELF BE USED BY OTHERS, NOT EVEN THOSE WHO CLAIM TO PROTECT ME!
"I DEDICATE MYSELF TO KNOWLEDGE SO THAT I WILL NEVER BE HELPLESS AGAIN! I SOLEMNLY DECLARE THIS TO YOU, GODDESS, BY MY HONOR, BY MY SWORD, BY THE NAME OF ROROWYN... WARRIOR OF THE SISTERHOOD OF STEEL!"
"Experience is a hard teacher. She gives the test first and the lesson afterward."
-Spud Items.

QUEEN OF SWORDS
BYE BYE FOLKS!
PRIESTESS OF SWORDS
PRINCESS OF SWORDS
?
VOSBIUS




Dear Christy,

I think **SOS** is definitely one of the 10 best comics on the market. Your characters seem as real as those of Burroughs, Donaldson and Lieber. Really! Oh, regarding Justin Proberts' letter in **SOS #6,** don't change Boronwë one bit. She wouldn't be as believable, or interesting, if you did. There aren't many celibate girls running around out there today, so it stands to reason that there would be even fewer in the not-so-prudish between times of the "Roman and Byzantine empires".

Stan Johnston
Yazzo City MS

*Boronwë was always meant to be a woman who enjoyed men and her behavior was very much in keeping with her own character and her attitudes as a Sister. Things aren't so different today, really. Humanity seems to change so much on the surface, and stay so much the same at the heart.*

Dear Christy,

I've just finished **SOS #6** and felt I had to write and tell you what a great job you folks have been doing. I started reading **SOS** with **#1** and have to admit that it was the cover that drew me in. It looks beautiful. As I read thru that 1st issue, I thought to myself great art but the story is really bogged down with lots of facts. Well, I decided to continue picking up the book because I liked the art (Good work, Mike!) and thought it would be worth it to give the storyline a chance to build.

I'm really glad that I did. Although the concept is not really new, I think you provide fresh insight about life within a Matriarchal society. It's refreshing to see people with human vulnerabilities struggling to meet the hardships of everyday life. I think Boronwë is a character you've developed quite well, but I hope you develop some stronger male characters as time goes on. Vosse is not my idea of a strong character. You haven't really developed much background about the guy.

I'm also interested in learning how the Sisters handle medical emergencies in the field?? Do they have M.A.S.H. units or is each soldier trained and equipped to deal with situations as they arise?? Could be a great angle to deal with, uh?? Please let me know. I'm a registered nurse and it's sort of a personal curiosity. Keep up the good work.

Tony Toetschinger
ST Paul, MN

*Each Sister receives a basic education along the way in treating battlefield injuries so that they can tend to them in emergency field situations. This is most important since they will at times need to treat themselves or their swordmates before help can come. They do have medics who specialize in injuries and illness and it's natural they'd have a wagon or some tent set aside for this.*

*There is some overlapping with the Daughters of Death because of their extensive knowledge of herbs and plants. Although the Daughters are mainly concerned with poisons and similarly dangerous drugs, they naturally have a great deal of other knowledge to share.*

Dear Christy and Cohorts,

Congratulations! This is the first comic book I have ever written to.

The art was disappointing at first, but I've grown to like it. I can't say that about other artists' works though. The stories are *great.* The first issue hooked me. I just finished **#6** and I can't wait for the next one. $1.50 is worth it.

Keep telling us more about the Sisterhood in the appendixes and about their history. Don't rush and start doing second rate work. So far, it's super, and **SOS** is one of my favorite books. Good luck!

I want to do something in comics myself. Writer or artist or business.

Lisa Durkin
Eire, PA

*I'm glad to see that you're aware there is more to the comics*

*business than writing or drawing. There are editors, production people, colorists, letterers, administrators, sales people, promotional people, secretaries and executives. You don't have to be able to draw to be a colorist, if you have a talent for colors. There always seems to be a need for good letterers, good editors, and certainly good business people. It may be less "glamorous", but is vital to the existence of the comics you enjoy.*

Dear Christy Marx,

First of all, you can probably imagine how long I've waited for this type of book, and I excitedly congratulate both you and Mike on the fabulous job you've done so far!

Some things that I *really* like about the series are 1) the Daughters of Death, 2) the government of the island of Ildana, 3) the realism (i.e. armor/weapons/figures that aren't ridiculous; detailed scope of the surrounding territories, etc.) 4) the almost biographical approach towards Boronwë's adventures, and 5) Dindra. She's great! Semi-familiar in character, but great! Among some of the things I love about her are her loyalty towards Boronwë, and her fantastic irresponsibility!!

I do have one gripe though. "Andras" in Greek means "man". The Andras we know is an arrogant bastard. Are you expressing a subliminal stereotype of males as the Sisterhood regards them? I really doubt it; but yet, the coincidence is uncanny! Please explain.

Jim Sahlas
Mississauga, ONT
CANADA

*I honestly can't remember how I came up with the name "Andras", but I can say with assurance that I didn't know it was Greek for "man". I probably pulled it out of one of my history books, as I did "Benignus", and it has no special significance beyond the fact that I liked the sound of it.*

Dear Christy & Mike,

**SOS #6** shows the kind of characterization for which I've been waiting. The women are finally developing three-dimensional personalities. After the battle of Prosper, Boronwë may find an understanding Dindra less of a gourdhead. Pages 15, 16 and 18 as well as 22-24 demonstrate the bond between Boronwë and Kelki. These women are both Sisters and friends. Kelki, in both #5 and #6, shows that there is more to her than Vosse's "poor, timid girl". I wonder if she would not manage decently, despite her self-doubts, *without* Vosse as a physical and, most importantly, psychological crutch.

But even more impressive than these relationships is your development of Cmmdr. Glespa. Shath's hairies! I am really growing fond of the Old Boar! Though she, as do all the military Sisters, takes her orders from Vandalis, she is no lackey blindly obeying her Princess. We've seen a little of her personal life with Aelin (pg. 6...what did someone say about the worth of a picture?). But her exchange with Vandalis is wonderful, showing that she understands Vandalis' needs all too well, and yet while fulfilling her orders, she takes every opportunity to warn Boronwë as best she can. After all, surely Glespa is smart enough to realize Boronwë is smart enough to take note of any unusual attention. Nevertheless, the true military commander follows her duty.

This letter has become overlong, so I'll end here. Keep the good work; you may (horror of horrors) actually turn me into a regular letter writer.

Peggy Tao
Princeton, NJ

*Your assessment of Glespa is quite shrewed. I wanted to more fully explore her relationship with Aelin, but simply never had the room. They were meant to be a classic example, within the Sisterhood, of love conflicting with duty.*

*My horror of horrors is when people don't write to me!*

Dear Christy,

As near as I can tell, you are the first writer to put out a companion fanzine on her own time to better develop her comic. Feel proud! Here you have a group of women functioning as equals in every respect to men without drawing on the worn-out cliches in girl-group situations. Here you have a realistic atmosphere in an interesting universe. Here you have **people** acting like them, instead of like the less believable Hero Complex.

As for **SOS #6,** I found it to be slightly confusing if enjoyable issue. Confusing because it developed some lesser-used characters, such as Cmmdr. Glespa.

I am growing more and more appreciative of Mike Vosburg's art. With each issue he personalizes the characters to match your conceptions even better. He has great skill in creating broad, expansive backgrounds. The extra space captures the essence of low-tech. The change from crowdedness is quite refreshing.

You have been handling the more sexual scenes quite tastefully. Your comment in the letters page about not being able to make a commitment as long as she is in the Sisterhood tied in with the treason charge nicely,

making me wonder if this isn't for a purpose. If she wasn't a Sister, Boronwë certainly would have more freedom to explore the world you have created...

And a very literal world it is. I have been able to find very few symbolic references in it, and very little philosophy of any kind. You'd think there would be more in a time comparable to Rome and Byzantium (your own admisssion!). Perhaps you could make this the subject of another Appendix or put it in the Scrolls.

That's all I have to say for now. Keep on producin'!

Scott Wesely
Lincoln, NE

*As you can now see, the development of Glespa was pivotal to Boronwë's trial and acquittal. In fact, you could say that Glespa was the turning point. Without her surprise testimony, there's little doubt Boronwë would have been found guilty.*

Dear Christy & Mike,

Well, the long awaited event has finally occured. I'm talking about the first year of **SOS.** This issue, like so many of the others, leaves a lot open for debate. Things like "What's going to happen to Kelki", or "Who does Vandalis hate more? Boronwë or Lanna?" I'm sure you've got a few aces up your sleeve, Christy, but I figure you're going to put Boronwë on trial to find out why she didn't fire on her mate and then reveal some other unknown secret about Van and Lanna. All of this will lead to Boronwë's release and, possibly, Vandalis being ousted from the position of the Princess of Swords. I hope that on a few counts I'm wrong, these being Vandalis' ousting and anything but a fair trial for Boronwë.

Mike, the art in this issue is fabulous. To quote Billy Crystal, "It looks mahvelous, simply mahvelous." Some of the pages are reminiscent of Bill Sienkiewicz's work on **New Mutants.** Very eerie and surreal. Interesting uses for various lightings throughout the series.

I enjoyed the appendix at the end of this issue. I have often wondered what the significance was with the different colored uniforms. Also, the article on the order of the march will help things greatly in future issues.

I've been thinking, why don't you put out a Graphic Novel on the Sisterhood. It could explain a lot about the things that go on while the girls were in training.

I'm anxiously awaiting the next issue of **SOS.** Until then, may the Goddess be with you all.

Matthew Wilbur
San Diego, CA

*Boronwë has gone to the top of Vandalis' hit list. You were uncannily right in your predictions (more so than anyone else), but I hope you aren't too terribly disappointed with how it turned out.*

*This is, as I hope you're all aware by now, the last issue of* ***The Sisterhood of Steel*** *that Epic will publish. It's been a wonderful experience for me. I have learned a great deal about my own abilities and about the comics industry.*

*I've had the supreme pleasure of receiving intelligent, questioning, lively letters from readers who are not only enjoying The Sisterhood, but extrapolating from it, gaming with it, and generally getting as much from it as I have put into it.*

*I've had the opportunity to get to know some wonderful people at Marvel/Epic, as well as host of distributors, retailers, those who write about the industry, other publishers, and many others who have given their support and help.*

*At the same time, I've learned where the comics business has problems. An overall decline in reading in the United States, an attitude that comics are inferior reading material, the need to break into new markets and reach women in particular, and the growing atmosphere in this country of imposing one's personal moral standards upon everyone else be it the subject of films, music, comics or books. All these things will affect the growth or survival of this particular art/literary form. If that's important to you, be ready to fight for it.*

*At the time I write this, I cannot say how or when the* ***Sisterhood*** *will be published again, but there are lots of negotiations going on and there may be news even before this sees print. If you'd like to be on my personal mailing list for up-to-date information, please write and say so.*

*I will continue to publish* ***Scrolls of the Sisterhood*** *in a slightly different format. Please write for details.*

*Please write to let me know what you think of this conclusion and the events of the last two books. I value your input and it will help me with future development of The Sisterhood. Not to mention making me feel good.*

*But most of all, thank you. You've found or sought out this book, you'd plonked down your hard—earned cash for it, and now you sit there with it in your hands reading it, completing the flow of communication from me to you. What else can I say except.....see you later.*

Christy Marx

*Christy Marx, P.O. Box 1952, Wrightwood, CA, 92397*